



**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
State Fire Marshal Division**

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Policy #: INS ED-03 (2007)	Subject of Policy: Thumb Turn Locks on Doors in School Buildings		
Reviewed and Approved By: Jerry Rosendahl	Title: State Fire Marshal	Effective Date: 11/1/1999	Revised Date: July 10, 2007

APPLIES TO:

All Inspection Personnel, Inspection Supervisors, Code/Plans Specialists.

PURPOSE:

To prohibit thumb-turn locks in school buildings as addressed in MSFC (07) Section 1008.1.8.1.

POLICY:

SECTION 1 — THUMB TURN LOCKS ON DOORS IN SCHOOLS BUILDINGS

Thumb turn locks are acceptable in the following locations:

1. When the occupant load is 10 or less and the space is used as an office or storage area.

RATIONALE:

Questions have been raised about whether thumb turn locks are allowed on exit doors, or whether they are considered surface-mounted flush bolts (a review of the matter reveals that they are not). There has been some disagreement on where thumb-turn type locks can be used and where they can not. This policy was developed in response to a need to be uniform on how this is enforced.

Doors equipped with panic hardware are not allowed to be equipped with any other type of latching or locking device. Thumb-turn locks require manual operation and do not provide positive latching as required by the code [MSFC (07) Section 1008.1.8.1].

Where the device is over 48 inches off the floor in rooms used by children in grades K through 5, the younger children may not be able to reach the lock, thus requiring a "special knowledge or effort" [MSFC (07) Section 1008.1.8].

The State Fire Marshal Division considers having to take two actions to open a door "special knowledge or effort". MSFC (07) Section 1008.1.8.1 specifies that doors must be openable with not more than one releasing operation and that only one locking or latching device is allowed on a door.

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Due to potential egress difficulties associated with thumb turn locks, a maximum occupant load of 10 is permitted in spaces with thumb turn locks.